



# FACT SHEET

## U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet

### PACIFIC AIR FORCES

Pacific Air Forces, headquartered at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, is one of nine major commands of the U.S. Air Force and is air component of the U.S. Pacific Command.



#### Mission

PACAF's primary mission is to provide ready air and space power to promote U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific region during peacetime, through crisis and in war.

The command's vision is to be the most respected air warrior team employing the full spectrum of air and space power, with our Asia-Pacific partners, to ensure peace and advance freedom.

PACAF's area of responsibility extends from the west coast of the United States to the east coast of Africa and from the Arctic to the Antarctic, more than 100 million square miles. The area is home to nearly two billion people who live in 44 countries. PACAF maintains a forward presence to help ensure stability in the region.

#### Personnel and Resources

The command has approximately 45,000 military and civilian personnel serving in nine major locations and numerous smaller facilities, primarily in Hawaii, Alaska, Japan, Guam and South Korea. Approximately 300 fighter and attack aircraft are assigned to the command.

#### Organization

PACAF's major units are 5th Air Force, Yokota Air Base, Japan; 7th Air Force, Osan AB, South Korea; 11th Air Force, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska; and 13th Air Force, Andersen AFB, Guam.

Major units also include 3rd Wing, Elmendorf AFB ; 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB, South Korea; 15th Air Base Wing, Hickam AFB; 18th Wing, Kadena AB, Japan (Okinawa); 51st Wing, Osan AB; 343rd Wing, Eielson AFB, Alaska; 35th Fighter Wing, Misawa AB, Japan; 374th Airlift Wing, Yokota AB; and the 36th Air Base Wing, Andersen AFB.

#### History

PACAF traces its roots to the activation of Far East Air Forces, Aug. 3, 1944, at Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. FEAF was subordinate to the U.S. Army Forces Far East and served as the headquarters of Allied Air Forces Southwest Pacific Area. By 1945, three numbered air forces -- 5th, 7th and 13th -- were supporting operations in the Pacific. At that time, the Army Air Forces in the Pacific became part of the largest and most powerful military organization ever fielded by any country in the world.

After World II, FEAF and 5th Air Force remained in Japan, while 7th Air Force operated from Hawaii, and 13th Air Force from the Philippines. In the post-war years, FEAF was designated the theater air force for the Far East Command. All air forces in the Far East and Southwest Pacific were placed under one Air Force commander for the first time.

When the North Koreans crossed the 38th parallel June 25, 1950, FEAF consisted of 5th Air Force, 13th Air Force, 20th Air Force and the Far East Materiel Command. Four years after the Korean War armistice, FEAF was redesignated Pacific Air Forces and transferred its headquarters to Hickam.

By 1960, PACAF maintained a combat-ready deterrent force of some 35 squadrons, operating from 10 major bases in a half-dozen countries. In the early 1960s communist military strength and firepower in Vietnam increased. As a result, PACAF began a buildup in the area with the addition of troops and better arms and equipment.

Combat aircraft of PACAF flew their last strikes in Cambodia Aug. 15, 1973, writing the final chapter to the long and costly history of active American participation in the Indochina War. The post-Vietnam era found the command focusing on improving its readiness.

PACAF's organizational structure saw a marked period of rapid and extensive changes. Andersen was reassigned from Strategic Air Command in 1989, and 11th Air Force became a part of the command in late 1990. Following the volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo, Clark AB, the Philippines, was closed and 13th Air Force relocated to Andersen in 1991.

In 1992, changes took place in force structure within PACAF as the command assumed control of theater-based tactical airlift wings, theater C-130 aircraft and crews, and associated theater C-130 support. PACAF also gained control of all operational support aircraft and all aeromedical airlift assets in the Pacific.

Throughout its history PACAF has played a vital role in world events. In addition to its key combat role in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, PACAF units fought in Desert Storm in 1991, and they continue to deploy to Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Italy for peacekeeping operations. PACAF provided its expertise, aircraft, personnel and equipment to facilitate the new Expeditionary Air Force, especially as it applied to successful airbridge operations spanning the vast Pacific Ocean. Following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, PACAF again demonstrated its intrepid spirit through its units deployed in support of operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom.

Since 1944, the command has participated in more than 140 humanitarian operations within its area of responsibility and beyond. In these operations PACAF people quickly and efficiently airlifted food, medicine and other supplies to areas devastated by storms, floods, earthquakes, volcanoes and other natural disasters.

Additionally, the command supported three of the largest evacuations ever undertaken by the Air Force: the Newlife evacuation of Vietnamese in 1975, the Fiery Vigil evacuation of Clark Air Base, Philippines, after the 1991 volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo, and the Pacific Haven operation to support and resettle Kurdish evacuees in 1997.

For more than five decades PACAF has served in defense of the nation. The command continually prepares to bring air power quickly and decisively to the far reaches of the Pacific.

#### **Point of Contact**

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